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RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 0390  
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RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0804  
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0641  
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA PRIORITY 0253  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0719  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USUN NEW YORK 000268

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [UNSC](#) [KPKO](#)  
SUBJECT: UNSC/DARFUR: SE NATSIOS MEETINGS ON APRIL 2

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR JACKIE SANDERS FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Special Envoy of the President for Sudan Andrew Natsios met on April 2 with United Nations leadership to discuss the state of play in New York on Darfur in the wake of the Arab League Summit in Riyadh. Despite a sense of frustration at Sudanese President Bashir's continued stall tactics and a recognition that a UN peacekeeping operation is necessary in Darfur, the UN wants to proceed cautiously on sanctioning the Government of National Unity (GNU), inter alia to avoid derailing the political initiative underway. Natsios said that, while we continue to work on a peacekeeping operation, we should urge the GNU to maintain the current "unannounced ceasefire" in Darfur at least until the beginning of the rainy season, and to ensure the implementation of the humanitarian access agreement just struck in Khartoum. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) During an April 2 visit to New York, Special Envoy (SE) Natsios and Chief of Staff Andrew Steinfeld met with Ambassador Alex Wolff, Ambassador Jackie Sanders, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General (SYG) Ban Ki-moon, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Under-SYG Jean-Marie Guehenno and Assistant-SYG Hedi Annabi, DPKO Africa Director Dmitry Titov, Department of Political Affairs U/SYG B. Lynn Pascoe, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) U/SYG John Holmes and Chinese Permanent Representative (PR) Wang Guang-ya.

HARSH WORDS IN RIYADH  
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¶3. (C) SYG Ban described the hard line he took against the defensive posture Bashir took in his opening statement and subsequent discussions about Darfur at the Arab League Summit in Riyadh. Ban said at one point he had told Bashir that the "argumentative" and "combative" approach he was taking could result in a loss of mutual trust and friendship. DPA U/SYG Pascoe separately characterized the exchange as a "knock-down, drag-out fight" between the sides of Ban and Konare against Bashir. Ban had pushed back on Bashir's insistence that all forces in Darfur be African, saying a majority of 5,000-6,000 would be possible but not more. Ban

said he had countered Bashir's demand that a new UNSC resolution be passed to confirm UN funding for the bolstered African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) force by stating that there would be no UN money until agreement was reached on command and control and on force generation for the hybrid operation.

¶4. (C) SYG Ban lauded the mediation efforts of Saudi King Abdullah, who, after some private coaching from Ban, had supported the UN position, as had African Union (AU) Commission Chair Konare. Ban suggested that the USG consider complimenting Abdullah on his personal intervention with Bashir, which in Ban's estimation, "made a big difference." Ban had made the rounds with other Arab League leaders at the Summit to call for Darfur progress, and he was optimistic that the Arab League could be helpful in further mediation with Sudan. U/SYG Pascoe seconded this assessment, adding that all the Arabs present were "fed up with Bashir."

¶5. (C) In stark contrast to the optimism of SYG Ban and U/SYG Pascoe, DPKO officials separately shared with SE Natsios a newly-received communique from the AU office in Khartoum which, according to A/SYG Annabi, "takes us back to square one" on UN-AU Darfur peacekeeping. The communique was one version, attributed to the Arab League but sent from Khartoum, of the Riyadh outcome, calling for a meeting of the Tripartite Mechanism to agree on details of the Heavy Support Package (HSP) and the appointment of the Joint Special Representative for the hybrid; to supervise DPA implementation; and to formalize UN funding for AU peacekeeping efforts in Darfur. Annabi commented that under such terms, there was no point to the UN and the AU meeting the GNU in Addis on April 9 as originally envisioned in the March 28 Riyadh communique.

#### SANCTIONS TO SPUR ACTION

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¶6. (C) SE Natsios told Ban, Pascoe and Guehenno that stall tactics were nothing new from the Khartoum regime, which he characterized as expert at "delaying, lying, putting the international community on the defensive and trying to divide and conquer international stakeholders." Such tactics made a case for seeking sanctions against the GNU. Natsios said that something must be done to spark progress from Bashir and added that there was intense political pressure in the U.S. to act against Sudan. Natsios reported that he had privately previewed sanctions with Bashir, who had said at the time he understood.

¶7. (C) SYG Ban and Chinese PR Wang were skeptical of the efficacy of Sudan sanctions, which Wang warned would disrupt the "fragile balance" achieved under the Eliasson-Salim political initiative. Despite this skepticism, Wang stressed the need to continue cooperation with the USG in addressing Darfur, given what he said were shared objectives despite differing approaches. Wang expressed concern over the private media campaign launched against Beijing by linking its handling of Darfur with its hosting of the 2008 Olympic games. Ban described his recent conversation with Secretary Rice in which he had asked for two to four weeks to give "political space" before the imposition of U.S. unilateral sanctions on Sudan; Ban said that Eliasson shared this request for more "breathing space" before taking action against Sudan. Pascoe assured that the suspension of unilateral sanctions Ban sought would not be a protracted one and that Ban "did not need to be convinced" of the need to pressure the GNU for action on Darfur.

¶8. (C) As confidence-building measures in the meantime, SE Natsios suggested that both China and the UN Secretariat press the GNU to implement the March 28 agreement it concluded with the UN on humanitarian access as quickly as possible, and to encourage the GNU and the rebel groups to observe the current "unannounced ceasefire" (NOTE: Deaths of

five AMIS peacekeepers notwithstanding. END NOTE) for the next ten weeks until the ten-week rainy season, thus creating five months of the political space both China and the UN were seeking to move the Eliasson effort forward.

#### BALANCING POLITICS AND PEACEKEEPING

19. (C) All UN officials stressed the need to strengthen the political process in Darfur, including the diplomatic initiative led by UN Special Envoy Eliasson and AU Special Envoy Salim. Chinese PR Wang acknowledged the multiplicity of similar mediation efforts underway (e.g. Eritrea, Libya, Chad, Egypt), and mentioned that Beijing would dispatch an envoy to Khartoum in early April. Wang reiterated his faith in the November 16 Addis Ababa Agreement as the appropriate peacekeeping track to balance the political process. SYG Ban noted the "real progress" Eliasson made with National Redemption Front (although not so with the G-19 faction) and Justice and Equality Movement rebels and agreed with SE Natsios that a firm date should be set for those groups to convene to discuss a common position. DPA U/SYG Pascoe stressed that the political effort be accelerated and that all attention not be focused on peacekeeping, adding that the Chinese could be instrumental in "closing gaps" on both fronts with the Sudanese.

10. (C) DPKO U/SYG Guehenno and A/SYG Annabi shared SE Natsios' skepticism about Sudanese sincerity on agreements the GNU was making with the international community. Even before the revised Riyadh communique from Khartoum was circulated, Guehenno dismissed the potential April 9 meeting between the UN, AU and GNU to discuss the HSP as "at best a waste of time." Guehenno acknowledged the need for a strong UN peacekeeping operation in Darfur to protect the peace process, but he echoed Pascoe's statement that too much focus on the military aspect would be "dangerous." Guehenno suggested that the USG work quietly with Eliasson to bring the rebels to a common platform on which a Darfur agreement could be built. Guehenno recommended exploring ways to put the GNU on the defensive politically so that the

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international community was not always forced to react to Sudanese intransigence. Guehenno hoped the UN and AU could reach a tough joint position vis-a-vis Sudan but expressed concern that this could be accomplished when Konare visits New York on April 16.

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11. (C) SE Natsios made a strong bid with Pascoe and Guehenno for Hilde Johnson's candidacy for Special Representative of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to replace Jan Pronk. Guehenno admitted to a sense of skepticism at the UN of Khartoum's receptiveness to Johnson and worried about potential Khartoum-Norway tension. Guehenno said that European Union (EU) Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region of Africa Aldo Ayello had been considered but would not be available until the summer. He also said that former EU Special Representative for Sudan Pekka Haavisto had been a potential candidate until his recent re-election to the Finnish Parliament.

#### CAUTIOUS HUMANITARIAN HOPE

12. (C) SE Natsios commended OCHA U/SYG Holmes on the UN's recent agreement with the GNU to address continuing bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian assistance. Holmes reported the establishment of a committee to follow-up on implementation of the communique, and Natsios asked that the UN keep the USG informed of any violations. Holmes further reported that he had quietly raised the particular cases of International Rescue Committee (IRC) and CARE to the GNU. The GNU has refused to grant staff from both IRC and CARE the necessary permits to continue working in Darfur, effectively blocking the work of each organization. SYG Ban told SE

Natsios that Holmes referred to his barring from a Darfur IDP camp by Sudanese military forces as a "simple mistake by low-level security." Others in OCHA, however, consider the incident to be a deliberate obstruction.

¶13. (U) SE Natsios cleared this message.  
WOLFF